

## REMARKS

This Reply to Final Office Action is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed on November 10, 2005. Claims 17-39, 44 and 46-48 are pending in the present Application. Applicants have amended claims 17, 44 and 48. Accordingly, claims 17-39, 44 and 46-48 are still at issue.

With this Reply, Applicants submit a Petition for a One-Month Extension of Time, making Applicants' Reply due on or before March 10, 2006. Accordingly, Applicants Reply is timely filed.

The Examiner rejected claims 17-20, 22-28, 30-37, 39, 44, 46 and 47 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Curry, et al.* (U.S. 6,053,764) in view of *Arnett* (U.S. 5,302,140). The Examiner also rejected claims 21 and 38 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Curry* in view of *Arnett*, and further in view of *Rutkowski, et al.* (U.S. 5,639,261). The Examiner further rejected claim 29 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Curry* in view of *Arnett*, and further in view of *Gutierrez, et al.* (U.S. 6,585,540). The Examiner also rejected claim 48 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Curry* in view of *Welch, et al.* (4,875,880). However, Applicants submit that claims 17-39, 44 and 46-48, as amended, are patentable over the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination.

As shown in FIG. 2, independent claim 17, as amended, requires a frame 22 having a top flange 30 and a bottom flange 34. Frame 22 includes a plurality of faceplate openings 38. As best seen in FIG. 12, faceplate 24 is mountable to the frame 22 within the top flange 30 and the bottom flange 34, and the faceplate 24 has a

plurality of mounting openings. Each mounting opening has at least one modular jack retention latch 64 or 66 **protruding within the mounting opening** (see FIG. 6). Patch panel 20 also includes at least one modular jack 26 mountable into a rear side of the faceplate 24.

As discussed with Examiner Figueroa during the January 10, 2006 interview, Applicants submit that *Curry* and/or *Arnett*, taken alone or in combination, do not disclose each mounting opening having at least one modular jack retention latch 64 or 66 protruding within the mounting opening. As discussed in specification paragraph [0036], modular jack retention latches 64, 66 protrude within the mounting opening, such as mounting opening 56 (see FIG. 6), and allow the modular jacks, such as jack 26, to be mounted straight into the rear of the faceplate 24. Thus, the modular jack retention latches 64, 66 maximize the patch panel density because the straight-in insertion of the modular jacks minimizes the required distance between two vertically stacked modular jacks. Moreover, it would not be obvious to modify the adapter 30 in *Arnett* to include a modular jack retention latch protruding within the mounting opening. In fact, if inner wall surface 59 of groove 55 protruded within the opening of the adapter 30, connector 60 would be inoperable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 17 is patentable over the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination. Claims 18-39 are asserted to be allowable based on their dependency from allowable claim 17.

For at least the reasons discussed above regarding independent claim 17, Applicants submit that independent method claim 44, as amended, is patentable over

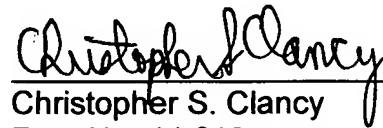
the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination. Claims 46 and 47 are asserted to be allowable based on their dependency from allowable claim 44.

As shown in FIG. 2, independent claim 48, as amended, requires a frame 22 having a top flange 30 and a bottom flange 34. Frame 22 includes a plurality of faceplate openings 38. As best seen in FIG. 12, faceplate 24 is mountable to the frame **entirely within** the top flange 30 and the bottom flange 34, and the faceplate 24 has a plurality of mounting openings. Each mounting opening has at least one modular jack retention latch 64 or 66 (see FIG. 6). Patch panel 20 also includes at least one modular jack 26 mountable into a rear side of the faceplate 24.

As discussed with Examiner Figueroa during the January 10, 2006 interview, Applicants submit that *Curry* and/or *Welch*, taken alone or in combination, do not disclose a faceplate mountable to the frame entirely within the top flange and the bottom flange. As the Examiner stated on page 8 of the November 10, 2005 Final Office Action, *Curry* discloses only a part of the faceplate mounted within the flanges. Moreover, it would not have been obvious to modify *Curry* because the front housing 14 cannot be mounted entirely within the patch panel 12. In fact, the entire front housing 14 would not fit within the top edge 29 and the bottom edge 33 of patch panel 12. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 48 is patentable over the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that claims 17-39, 44 and 46-48 are allowable and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christopher S. Clancy", is written over a horizontal line.

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